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E.O. 12065: GDS 12/7/85 (FRIEDMAN, TOWNSEND B.) OR-P
TAGS: SHUM AR
SUBJ: (U) HUMAN RIGHTS SUMMARY - NOVEMBER 29-DECEMBER 6, 1979
REF: BUENOS AIRES 9806
(C) SUMMARY: GENERAL VIOLA'S APPOINTMENT OF GENERAL GALTIERI AS HIS SUCCESSOR AS ARMY COMMANDER PROMISES CONTINUATION OF POLICIES WHICH HAVE MADE SIGNIFICANT RECENT PROGRESS ON THE HUMAN RIGHTS FRONT. BUENOS AIRES
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HERALD EDITOR ROBERT COX WILL LEAVE ARGENTINA FOR AT LEAST A YEAR FOLLOWING ANONYMOUS THREATS BY PEOPLE HE BELIEVES TO BE MEMBERS OF SOME SECURITY APPARATUS. END SUMMARY.
1. (C) ARMY COMMANDER NAMED -----
AFTER MONTHS OF SPECULATION ARMY COMMANDER ROBERTO VIOLA NAMED GENERAL LEOPOLDO GALTIERI AS HIS SUCCESSOR. GALTIERI WAS LONG KNOWN TO BE VIOLA'S PREFERRED CANDIDATE FOR THE JOB AND HIS DESIGNATION PROMISES THE CONTINUATION OF THE RELATIVE MODERATION AND POSITIVE, IF SLOW, EVOLUTION IN POLITICAL AND HUMAN RIGHTS MATTERS HERE. GENERAL SUAREZ MASON, THE STANDARD-BEARER OF THE HARD-LINERS IS SLATED FOR RETIREMENT AS IS HIS IDEOLOGICAL PARTNER, GENERAL RAMON CAMPS.
2. (C) HERALD EDITOR TO LEAVE ARGENTINA -----
BUENOS AIRES HERALD EDITOR ROBERT COX HAS ANNOUNCED HIS DECISION TO TAKE A YEAR'S LEAVE OF ABSENCE FROM ARGENTINA
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DEPARTMENT OF STATE A/CDC/MR
REVIEWED BY Brucella DATE 1/26/82
PORTIONS DENIED AS INDICATED

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BEGINNING DECEMBER 16. COX MADE HIS DECISION IN THE WAKE OF A LETTER THREATENING HIM AND HIS FAMILY WITH DEATH UNLESS THEY DEPARTED (BUENOS AIRES 9865). THE LETTER, WHICH CAME IN THE WAKE OF OTHER THREATS, PURPORTED TO BE FROM THE EXTREME LEFT MONTONERO TERRORISTS. HOWEVER COX'S [redacted] SUSPICION IS THAT ONE OR ANOTHER OF THE SECURITY SERVICES, ACTING WITHOUT THE KNOWLEDGE OR APPROVAL OF RESPONSIBLE GOA AUTHORITY, IS PROBABLY THE REAL AUTHOR. B1,ED

3. (U) UNDER COX'S DIRECTION THE ENGLISH-LANGUATE HERALD HAS BEEN A CALM, BALANCED AND ELOQUENT SPOKESMAN OF HUMAN RIGHTS EVEN IN THE DARKEST DAYS OF TERRORIST VIOLENCE AND SUBSEQUENT GOVERNMENT REPRESSION. IN THE LATER PERIOD COX EARNED THE EMNITY OF THE FAR

RIGHT FOR HIS STANCE.

4. (C) COX AND THE HERALD HAVE BEEN IMPORTANT FACTORS AS ARGENTINA STRUGGLES TO ACKNOWLEDGE AND COME TO TERMS WITH THE GROSS VIOLATIONS OF HUMAN RIGHTS THAT HAVE TAKEN PLACE HERE. PRESIDENT VIDELA TACITLY RECOGNIZED COX'S IMPORTANCE LAST MONTH, WHEN, UPON HEARING THAT COX WAS CONSIDERING ABANDONING ARGENTINA BECAUSE OF MOUNTING THREATS AGAINST HIM, HE SENT A PERSONAL MESSAGE TO THE BRITISH EDITOR ASKING HIM TO REMAIN IN THE COUNTRY. HE HAS AGAIN SOUGHT TO REASSURE COX THAT HE WOULD BE PROTECTED. THE COX HOME WAS GIVEN POLICE PROTECTION FOR ONE DAY. THE GUARD ENDED, WAS BRIEFLY RESUMED AND THEN ENDED AGAIN. THIS UNUSUAL PROCEDURE CAUSED COX TO SPECULATE IN HIS PAPER WHETHER THE COMING AND GOING OF THE GUARD WAS SIMPLY INEFFICIENCY OR, MORE SINISTER, SOMEBODY WAS COUNTERMANDING ORDERS TO SUPPLY HIM WITH PROTECTION. UNFORTUNATELY, SUCH SPECULATION IS LEGITIMATE. EVEN WITH THE SUPPORT OF PRESIDENT VIDELA COX CANNOT FEEL SECURE IN ARGENTINA.

5. (C) MINISTER OF INTERIOR ALBINO HARGUINDEGUY'S REACTION TO THE THREATS TO COX WAS TO SAY TRUTHFULLY, [redacted] THAT SUCH WAS THE PRICE OF PUBLIC LIFE IN ARGENTINA. THE REMARK HAS EARNED HIM A STINGING REPLY NOT ONLY FROM THE HERALD BUT FROM SEVERAL OTHER NEWSPAPERS. B1,ED

6. (C) IRONICALLY, COX'S MOST LIKELY SUCCESSOR AS EDITOR IS THE HERALD'S POLITICAL COLUMNIST JAMES NIELSON, WHO HAS ALREADY PROVEN HIMSELF TO BE MORE OUTSPOKEN IN ATTACKING GOVERNMENT HUMAN RIGHTS POLICIES THAN COX.

7. (C) TIMERMAN THREATS -----

THE POSSIBILITY THAT FRIENDS AND RELATIVES OF FORMER NEWSPAPER PUBLISHER JACOBO TIMERMAN WOULD BE SINGLED

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OUT FOR REPRISALS IF HE SPEAKS OR PUBLISHES ARTICLES
ABROAD ATTACKING ARGENTINA CONTINUES TO GENERATE
SPECULATION IN ARGENTINA AND THE UNITED STATES. WE HAVE
BEEN TOLD FOR EXAMPLE THAT TIMERMAN'S BROTHER, JOSE,
IS NOW AMONG THOSE URGING THAT THE EXILED NEWSPAPERMAN
NOW REMAIN SILENT, LEST HE, JOSE, BE KILLED.

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9. (C) THOUGH ROBERT COX USED THE HERALD TO SUPPORT DEMANDS FOR THE RELEASE OF TIMERMAN WE DO NOT BELIEVE THAT THE RECENT THREATS TO HIM ARE PART OF A PLAN TO KEEP TIMERMAN SILENT. THIS OPINION IS SHARED BY COX HIMSELF AND THE ISRAELIS. RATHER, AS WE NOTED ABOVE, COX HIMSELF HAD EARNED THE ENMITY OF THE FAR RIGHT HERE. SOME AMONG THIS GROUP APPARENTLY DECIDED
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THE TIME HAD COME TO GO AFTER HIM.
10. (C) SARAGOVI CASE -----
THE MOTHER OF HORACIO OSCAR SARAGOVI, THE VICTIM OF A PARTICULARLY GROSS MISCARRIAGE OF JUSTICE, HAS TOLD US PREIDENT VIDELA WILL BE SOON CONSIDERING A REQUEST FOR HER SON'S PARDON. N THE PBASIS OF THIS INFORMATION AMBASSADOR CASTRO CALLED THE PRESIDENCY TO AGAIN URGE THAT SARAGOVI BE PARDONED. THE AMBASSADOR WAS PROMISED THAT VIDELA WILL GIVE THE CASE A SYMPATHETIC HEARING. INDIVIDUALS IN THE PRESIDENCY HAVE PRIVATELY SUGGESTED TO US THAT THEY TOO ARE CONVINCED THAT SARAGOVI IS THE VICTIM OF A "JUDICIAL ERROR".
11. (U) JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES' PROPERTY SEIZED -----

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SOME PROPERTIES IN THE PROVINCE OF BUENOS AIRES WERE TAKEN OVER BY THE MUNICIPAL GOVERNMENTS LAST WEEK, BASED ON RULINGS THAT THE JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES ARE AN ILLEGAL ASSOCIATION IN ARGENTINA. THE TAKEOVER OF THE PROPERTIES TOOK PLACE PURSUANT TO AN ITEM IN THE CIVIL CODE WHICH STATES THAT WHEN AN ASSOCIATION IS DISSOLVED ITS PROPERTIES SHOULD TRANSFER TO THE STAT IF THE ASSOCIATION'S BYLAWS HAVE NO PROVISION FOR THEIR DISPOSITION.

12. (S) DISAPPEARANCES -----

WE ARE SEEKING TO DEVELOP MORE INFORMATION ON THE LIST OF RECENT DISAPPEARANCES SUPPLIED TO THE DEPARMENT BY AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL AND OTHER SOURCES (STATE 311377). BECAUSE THERE HAVE BEEN NO REPORTS OF UNEXPLAINED DIS-

APPEARANCES TO LOCAL ARGENTINE HUMAN RIGHTS ORGANIZATIONS SINCE THE END OF SEPTEMBER, THE NAMES FOR OCTOBER ARE PARTICULARLY INTERESTING. WE DO HAVE SOME INFORMATION IN OUR FILES ON A NUMBER OF THE INDIVIDUAL LISTED:

(A) ADRIANI LESGART (REPORTEDLY DISAPPEARED ON SEPT. 12): SHE WAS THE LEADER OF THE MONTONERO PRESS AND PROPAGANDA SQUADS AND WAS CAPTURED IN SEPTEMBER (BUENOS AIRES 8660).

(B) JULIO SUAREZ (REPORTEDLY DISAPPEARED OCT. 1 IN RIO NEGRO PROVINCE): SUAREZ WAS REPORTEDLY A MONTONERO BASED IN MEXICO. HE WAS ARRESTED IN 1975 IN ARGENTINA, HELD UNDER PEN, AND GIVEN THE RIGHT OF OPTION TO PERU THAT SAME YEAR.

(C) JOSE DALMOS LOPEZ (REPORTEDLY DISAPPEARED OCT. 1 IN RIO NEGRO PROVINCE): IN JANUARY 1978 DALMOS LOPEZ WAS SECRETARY GENERAL OF THE "RESISTENCE CGT", A FICTITIOUS MONTONERO LABOR ORGANIZATION.

(D) HUGO VERA AND WIFE; OSCAR VERA AND WIFE (REPORTEDLY DISAPPEARED OCT. 1 IN RIO NEGRO PROVINCE): IN MID-NOVEMBER WE WERE TOLD BY A RESIDENT OF MENDOZA THAT THE VERA COUPLES HAD SURFACED UNDER ARREST IN MENDOZA. (ON OCT. 13 A REPORT IN LA PRENSA HAD STATED THAT SECURITY FORCES HAD BROKEN UP A TERRORIST GROUP IN BARILOCHE, RIO NEGRO PROVINCE AND FOUR (SIC) PEOPLE ARRESTED HAD BEEN TRANSFERRED TO MENDOZA FOR QUESTIONING THE PAPER GAVE NO NAMES BUT SAID THAT THE CELL HAD BEEN DISCOVERED WHEN A WOMAN DESERTED THE TERRORISTS AND TURNED HERSELF OVER TO THE POLICE. OUR SOURCE FROM MENDOZA CONFIRMED THE OUTLINE OF THE STORY AND GAV US THE NAMES OF THE VERA COUPLE.)

(E) LILIANA BERMUDEZ DE HERRERA (DISAPPEARED IN MENDOZA OCT. 13): OUR SORCE FROM MENDOZA, WHO CLAIMED TO KNOW BERMUDEZ, SAID THAT SHE HAS SURFACED UNDER ARREST IN MENDOZA.

(F) EDUARDO URRETAVIZCAYA (REPORTELY DISAPPEARED

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BUENOS AIRES SEPT. 3): HE WAS ONCE ASSOCIATED WITH
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AND WAS ACCUSED OF TERRORIST ACTIVITIES IN 1976.
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13. (C) THUS,ON THE BASIS OF OUR RECORDS AT LEAST SOME OF THOSE WHO DISAPPEARED WERE PROBABLY ACTIVE MONTONEROS. IN ADDITION, ANOTHER OF THOSE ON THE AMNESTY LIST CRISTINA GUILLEN, SEEMS TO HAVE BEEN INVOLVED WITH TERRORISTS SINCE, ACCORDING TO THE AI INFORMATION SHE WAS WOUNDED IN A SHOOTOUT WITH POLICE DURING WHICH HER HUSBAND DIED.
14. (S) IN ADDITION TO SEEKING TO CONFIRM THESE REPORTED DISAPPEARANCES AND DISCOVER THESE INDIVIDUALS' FATE, WE ARE LOOKING IN PARTICULAR INTO THE ALLEGATION THAT IN SOME CASES SMALL CHILDREN OF THE DISAPPEARED VANISHED WITH THEIR PARENTS.
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15. (U) BOMBS AWAY-----
TWO NEW BOMB ATTACKS WERE REPORTED THIS WEEK. A MEDIUM SIZE BOMB REPORTEDLY EXPLODED AT THE OFFICE OF PRENSA ECONOMICA, AMONTHLY ECONOMIC REVIEW. ANOTHER BOMB WENT OFF AT A RESTAURANT WHERE A GROUP OF PERONISTS PLANNED TO HOLD A DINNER MEETING, CAUSING THE CANCELATION OF THE AFFAIR. NOBODY WAS HURT IN THE ATTACKS.
16. (U) INRECENT MONTHS A NUMBER OF BOMBINGS HAVE BEEN REPORTED. BESIDES THE JEWISH SEMINARY, THE TARGETS HAV INCLUDED HOPS AND IN ONE INSTANCE AN APARTMENT BUILDING WHERE SEVERAL FLAG OFFICERS HAVE THEIR HOMES. THERE WERE NO VICTIMS IN THESE ATTACKS AND SO FAR AS WE KNOW NOBODY HAS ASSUMED RESPONSIBILITY FOR THEM. FOR THE MOMENT THEY WERE WRITTEN OFF AS THE

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SORT OF VIOLENT BACKGROUND THAT ACCOMPANIES LIFE AND POLITICS IN ARGENTINA DN SEEM TO CAUSE LITTLE CONCERN AMONG THE PEOPLE.

17. (C) LATE ITEM ON SARAGOVI -----

FOLLOWING THE AMBASSADOR'S INITITATIVE ON BEHALF OF SARAGOVI THE PRESIDENCY HAS INFORMEDUS THAT HIS REQUST FOR COMMUTATION OF HIS SENTENCE IS UNDER REVIEW. THE PRESIDENCY ADDED THAT, WHATEVER THE OUTCOME OF THIS REVIEW, IN MAY OF 1980 SARAGOVI WILL HAVE COMPLETED TWO THIRDS OF HIS SENTENCE, BECOMING ELIGIBLE TO APPLY FOR PAROLE STATUS UNDER "SUPREVISED LIBERTY." WE ARE INFORMING MRS. SARAGOVI.

CASTRO

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